

ABSTRACT

A computerized server selectively accepts service requests from clients connected to it by a communications network. In accordance with the present invention the permission to use a service is contingent on the requesting client performing a task which is easy to perform a limited number of times but is very costly to perform a large number of times. The server receives a service request from a client. The server also receives identifying information of that client, for example caller id information of a telephone number from which the client is further asked to call the server. The server examines data about previous service requests and the corresponding identifying information of clients. The request is approved if the requests with the same identifying information as the current request match a decision criterion for granting the request, for example if the number of these requests is below a predefined threshold.